

Three fire incidents in city 3 injured, shops and property damaged

By Staff Correspondent

Several fire incidents in the city Saturday left at least three persons injured, more than eight shops damaged and goods and property worth more than one lakh gutted.

Our DMCH Correspondent says: At least three persons sustained serious burn injuries Saturday when a gas line of the Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution Company burst into flame in the city.

Shafiqur (35), Babu (30), and Kharshid (35) met the disaster when they had tried to light a burner at around 2-45 pm at 128, Wapda Road, Rampura.

Witnesses said that the gas line had been leaking for about a month.

Soon after the accident, the line was disconnected by the authorities and there is no sign of danger any more, police said.

Police has restricted entry

of public into the surrounding area.

UNB reports: Goods worth about Tk 50 thousand were gutted by fire in a saw mill in Soarighat area in the city Saturday.

Fire Brigade sources said the fire broke out at around 2 am and engulfed the whole mill area.

Two young men who were sleeping in the Rafique Saw Mill escaped unhurt. They said the fire might have originated from short circuit.

Firemen rushed to the spot and extinguished the fire after two hours.

Another fire broke out at Muktiyoddah market in Mirpur Section 1 at about 5 am, damaging eight shops, including three book shops, one confectionery and a grocery shop.

Fire Brigade sources said the loss would be around Tk 70 thousand but it could not ascertain the cause of the fire.

Committee formed for fresh talks with tribals

RANGAMATI, Dec 21: Authorities have constituted an 8-member committee to re-open dialogue with the Parbatya Chattagram Jano Sanghati Samity for resolving the vexing tribal insurgency problem.

Official sources told UNB today the move followed eagerness expressed by the PCJSS leaders towards reinitiating an aborted peace process in the troubled hill tracts.

The PCJSS, the political mentor of so-called Shantibahini, operating from across the border, has been informed of the formation of the committee for talks.

Headed by an army brigade commander stationed in the Chittagong Hill Tracts area, the committee comprises Additional Divisional Commissioner of Chittagong (member-secretary), a representative of 24 infantry division, Vice-Chairman of Chittagong Development Board, former MP from Bandarban K S Prue, member of the Local Government Parishad of Rangamati Hill District Ganendu Bikash Chakma, members of the Local Government Parishad of Khagrachari Manindra Kishore Tripura and Abdul Wadud Bhuiyan.

A move by the present government towards a negotiated solution to the tribal issue was stalled as the PCJSS split out at the eleventh hour certain

conditions to holding the "political dialogue" in early November.

Earlier, the government had six meetings with the PCJSS leaders since October 1985 till the last one held in December 1988. All the talks failed to make any headway towards ending the subversive activities in the hill districts, mainly due to the PCJSS-dictated conditionalities.

Immediately before going for the stalled seventh dialogue, it demanded formation of a high-power parliamentary committee, and said they would sit with that committee in presence of a minister.

Meanwhile, the government declared amnesty for the tribal insurgents on October 22 this year.

Reliable sources said many insurgents, frustrated by the conflicts in PCJSS leadership and realising their mistakes, were ready to surrender but were obstructed by the high command of PCJSS.

Despite the obstruction, more than one hundred outlaws have surrendered to the security forces since the declaration of amnesty in a renewed peace move by the government.

Official sources said tribal refugees from camps in the Indian states of Tripura and Mizoram had been returning to their homes and hearth in increased numbers since the amnesty was declared.



South Asian leaders stand in front of an oil lamp after inaugurating the sixth SAARC summit in Colombo yesterday. From left: Pak Premier Nawaz Sharif, Indian Premier Narasimha Rao, Bangladesh Premier Begum Khaleda Zia, Maldives President Mamoon Abdul Gayoom, Sri Lankan President R Premadasa, Bhutanese King JS Wangechuk and partly hidden Nepali Premier Girija Prasad Koirala. — AFP photo

Cross-border terrorism

From Page 1 Col. 5

Colombo's disappointment over the collapse of the summit in November when at the last minute India insisted the meeting could not go ahead as scheduled without the participation of the King of Bhutan.

"You are all aware of the circumstances of that. I am never disappointed," he said adding that, "there is no bitterness. But we will try to make things better."

He stressed economic and trade cooperation within the region, which is home to 1.1 billion people, and said he could not understand why South Asia must live in poverty despite the resources in the region.

"We have resources and people in surplus. But we lack monetary resources," Premadasa said, adding that South Asia would aim for at least one meal a day for every citizen in the region.

He also rejected donors making human rights a condition for giving aid to countries in the region.

"We are more concerned about the human rights of our people than anyone else. We welcome reports on human rights. But they must not be made a condition for giving aid," Premadasa said.

The Colombo Declaration

too referred to human rights and said the issue should not be viewed in "narrow and exclusively political terms."

Most of the countries in SAARC have been under fire from human rights organisations while donors have often tried to link the issue to aid.

The King of Bhutan, Jigme Singye Wangechuk, at the opening of the summit, called for greater cooperation among SAARC nations to fight terrorism inspired by "illegal immigrants," a reference to Nepalis in his tiny kingdom.

The Nepali premier Girija Prasad Koirala responded by saying "love thy neighbour."

Relations between the two Himalayan kingdoms have been strained over the issue involving Bhutanese of Nepali origin in southern Bhutan.

Premadasa too made veiled attacks in his opening speech on his giant neighbour India which had earlier been accused of scuttling the summit originally scheduled for November.

Religious scriptures "tell us that we should have no hidden agenda and make no power plays. They tell us that we must learn from others and not seek to teach them lessons," Premadasa said during his lengthy speech.

Pakistan premier Nawaz

Sharif reiterated his proposal to free the region of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

"I am still hopeful that the leaders of South Asia will have the vision to banish for ever the spectre of nuclear weapons from the area," he said, India is resisting the Pakistan move.

Indian Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao stressed the regional grouping should adapt itself to the developments outside the region, according to AP.

Rao said the grouping should permit free movement of goods, services, capital and people throughout the region. "Sheer necessity dictates that we do more in the area of inter-regional commercial and economic exchange. We must not deny ourselves the advantage of geographical proximity."

President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom of the Maldives wanted a study on the protection and preservation of the environment of the region.

Bhargava Prime Minister Khaleda Zia sought greater role for women in development.

Security was tightened around Colombo to prevent possible attacks by rebels from the minority Tamil community fighting for a separate state in northeast Sri Lanka.

Launch with 100 aboard capsizes in Pirojpur

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Dec 21: A motor launch with 100 passengers capsized in the river Kocha Saturday evening near Kauhali station in Pirojpur district. According to preliminary report, about 100 passengers were on board the Hularhat-bound launch which sank immediately after leaving Kauhali launch station.

District officials rushed to the spot.

A UNB report from Pirojpur says: Ten people were feared drowned after a motor launch capsized in the Kauhali river this afternoon.

While most passengers swam ashore, the administration said ten of them could not be traced till 9.30 pm.

Truck strike may paralyse Ctg Port activities

CHITTAGONG, Dec 21:

Activities at the Chittagong Port may come to a standstill if the ongoing truck strike continues for another few days, reports UNB.

Expressing the apprehension, the Port authorities said that goods are piled up in the port as loading and unloading are being seriously hampered since the strike began December 17.

The cargo storage capacity of the port is 1 lakh 26 thousand tons but stock of goods already reached 82,000 tons in last five days. Before the truck workers enforced the strike, the port used to release 6,000 tons of goods everyday.

Despatch of foodgrains also remained suspended from different godowns, including Bandar and Silo.

The truck workers have begun their indefinite strike demanding appointment letters from the owners.

Several meetings among the police administration, workers and owners have so far failed to resolve the crisis.

Transport strike in N districts called off

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, Dec 21: Transport strike in 16 northern districts of the country has been called off after 22 days, following assurance from the owners that they will issue appointment letters to the workers.

At a tripartite meeting held Friday night at Natore, it was agreed that transport owners would issue appointment letters to the workers on a monthly basis. Terms and conditions of the appointment letters could be changed or modified after the High Court verdict on the issue.

Rajshahi BIT reopens

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, Dec 21: The classes of Bangladesh Institute of Technology (BIT) resumed today (Sunday) after 146 days' unscheduled closure. The residential hall reopened Saturday.

DUTA polls today

Election to the Dhaka University Teachers Association will be held today with two panels in an apparently close contest, reports UNB.

More than one thousand teachers will cast vote to elect a 15-member executive committee of DUTA for next year.

The DU teachers are grouped in three blocs White, Blue and Pink. The anti-establishment Blue and Pink groups have put up a joint panel against the pro-establishment White.

More than one thousand teachers will cast vote to elect a 15-member executive committee of DUTA for next year.

BDR

From Page 1 Col. 7

village, witnesses said. Shahjahan Chowdhury MP of Cox's Bazar-4 constituency, high BDR and district administration officials visited the spot.

Last week the Burmese forces killed two Bangladesh fishermen in a similar attack, sources said.

Meanwhile, a BDR press release issued in Dhaka said that Burmese border security force (Luntin Force) aided by Burmese Army supported by mortar and machine gun launched a dawn attack Saturday, on one of BOPs (Border Out Posts) of Bangladesh Rifles under Bandarban district.

During the attack one BDR personnel died and a few were wounded.

Our Staff Correspondent from Chittagong adds: The body of the BDR jawan was brought to Chittagong Saturday evening.



Regularity is Sabrina's secret

By Staff Correspondent

For Nahid Sabrina Alam regularity in studies is the key to success in examinations. Sabrina, of Vigarunnessa Noon College, Dhaka, stood first among the girls in the Humanities, Islamic Studies and Music Group and second overall in the combined merit list.

A shy, softspoken teenager, Sabrina Alam who obtained letters in Logic, Psychology, Geography and in Statistics, said she studied for four to five hours a day.

Sabrina's father Muhammad Badul Alam is the Principal of Narayananganj Tolaram College and her mother is a teacher of the Fazul Huiq Girls College in Gandaria.

Hard work

From Page 1 Col. 4

A student of Dhaka College, Arifin topped the combined merit list of the Science, Agriculture and Home Economics groups, securing letters in English, Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics and Statistics. His examination enrolment number bears an asterisk.

Talking to The Daily Star, a beaming Arifin, son of Shilpa Bank executive Shah Alam Chowdhury, said Saturday's results fulfilled his long-cherished desire to repeat the performance in the SSC examinations.

Arifin confided that regularity and hard work were the secrets of his success.

He said that proper guidance of the teachers and parents is needed for students to do well in examinations.

Arifin felt the need for competent teachers at the higher secondary level.

Arifin's father, who was away in Chittagong yesterday, was told the good news over telephone. His mother Mosaddaqa Khatun is a superintendent of Customs.



One should work out one's own method, says Sultana

By Staff Correspondent

It was a most pleasant surprise for the mother of Tanvira Afroze Sultana when The Daily Star correspondent conveyed the good news of her daughter's HSC result yesterday.

Tanvira topped the girls in the Science, Agriculture and Home Economics Groups of the Dhaka Board.

Tanvira, of Mymensingh Girls Cadet College, secured 957 marks to share the seventh position in the combined merit list with Ahsan Kabir of Mirzapur Cadet College, Tangail.

Hard work

From Page 1 Col. 4

A cadet of the 'Sadachar House,' Tanvira, conceded the result was beyond her expectations since she felt her performance in biology was not to her satisfaction.

She said that every student should select his or her goals in examinations. These include assessing one's level of preparedness, the weaknesses etc, and work out methods to overcome the problems.

"In our college, we prepared ourselves under strict discipline, which has also helped us," said Tanvira, the second of three daughters of Mohammad Abdul Ghani, an engineer with a private firm.

Tanvira also felt that regularity regarding studies prevents one from getting overworked on nervous before an examination.

DU exams postponed

All the examinations under course and traditional systems of Dhaka University scheduled for Dec 22 and 23 has been postponed, reports UNB.

The examination has been shifted due to unavoidable reasons, a press release said here Saturday.



Banning student politics is no solution: Pasha

By Staff Correspondent

Mohsin Pasha, who stood first in this year's HSC examinations from the Humanities group under Dhaka Board, felt terrorism must be eradicated from the educational institutions to save the students, the future of the nation, from ruination.

He said students had played key roles in all democratic movements in the country since 1947 for realising the rights of the people. Hence it would not be wise to ban student politics as a solution to campus trouble. Rather, the government should gear up law enforcement to root out terrorism, he felt.

Mohsin secured 891 marks out of a possible 1100 with distinctions in three subjects (maths, geography and statistics).

Five colleges dominate results

By Staff Correspondent

Only five institutions — of them three are exclusively for girls — dominated this year's merit lists of the HSC results published yesterday.

The students who have achieved the rare distinctions of being in the merit lists of different groups come from as many as 13 colleges.

Dhaka College alone had their 28 boys stood in the three merit lists — of Science, Arts and Commerce: 16 in the Science, 8 in Commerce and 4 in Arts.

Holy Cross College follows with nine places.

The Midnight File

Premadasa offers olive branch to Tigers

COLOMBO, Dec 21: Sri Lankan President Ranasinghe Premadasa today called on the leader of Tamil rebels to stop fighting for a separate state and hold peace talks. Premadasa made the call at his first news conference since he assumed office three years ago, held mainly to explain the decisions of a South Asian Summit meeting in Colombo today, reports Reuter.

US, EC fail to break impasse over subsidies

BRUSSELS, Dec 21: US and European officials admitted defeat Saturday in their latest effort to break an impasse over farm subsidies, delivering a sharp setback to world trade negotiations. There are still substantial differences. That is a disappointment, Dutch Prime Minister Ruud Lubbers said after a meeting between European Community representatives and US officials, led by Secretary of State James A Baker, reports AP.

Rutskoi presses Afghan foes for prisoner swap

ISLAMABAD, Dec 21: Russian Vice President Alexander Rutskoi on Saturday pressed his former Afghan foes for a prisoner swap.

But US-backed Afghan rebels have been resisting a prisoner exchange, holding out for further concessions, said several Afghan sources. Rutskoi said Friday the insurgents were bound to release some prisoners in keeping with an agreement reached at the first round of direct talks held in Moscow last month, reports AP.

UAE to raise imports

United Arab Emirates

Saturday held out a categorical assurance of increased imports from Bangladesh for reducing the trade gap between the two countries, reports UNB.

The assurance came from Khalifa Al-Yousuf, Head of the Department of Economy of UAE while speaking at the inaugural session of Bangladesh-UAE Joint Commission meeting at the State Guest House this morning.

Khalifa said his country would make all-out efforts to turn the bilateral trade more beneficial to the friendly people of the two countries.

Rajshahi University College closed sine die

RAJSHAHI, Dec 21: Rajshahi Government University College was today (Saturday) closed for an indefinite period following mounting tension over students' union election scheduled for December 30, reports UNB.

The decision was taken at the college staff council meeting at the principal's residence.

Campus sources said the situation deteriorated after the college administrative building was locked allegedly by JCD activists on Thursday.

Shop owners, students clash in city: 2 held

By Staff Correspondent

Police lobbed several rounds of tear gas shells and resorted to baton charge to separate two fighting groups near a shopping centre at New Elephant road yesterday evening. Two persons were arrested from the spot.

The clash ensued at around 5.30 pm when the shop owners and employees of Alpina Plaza reportedly chased a group of about 50 persons out of the shopping centre.

Soviet embassy

From Page 1 Col. 8

The Daily Star last night that Ambassador Alexeyev conveyed to the Foreign Office about his allegiance to the Russian Federation, the biggest republic of the disintegrating Soviet Union.

Most of the officials and staff of the former Soviet embassy in Dhaka are from the Russian federation.

Bangladesh is expected to recognize the Russian federation soon.

The officials and staff of the Russian embassy were in confusion on Saturday about proper shape, size and colour combination of the tri-colour white, red and blue flag of the Russian federation.

Meanwhile, the embassy reportedly received a message from the government of the Russian Federation in Moscow before formally announcing their allegiance.

Last week the Soviet embassy had started squeezing its activities, because of the apparent disintegration of the union, and a decision was taken to close down its press section within this month.

The Soviet Press Information Department, operating in Dhaka since the Pakistan days, had little duty to perform following the political transformation after the aborted coup of August. Due to lack of funds the department had to cut down the number of staff from 30 to 22.

Dacoity on trawlers

BARIGUNA, Dec 21: At least nine fishermen were injured as pirates swooped on three trawlers in the Bay and snatched fishing appliances worth about Tk 5 lakh early today.

of Bangladesh.

Bangladesh's imports from Emirates mounted to Tk 239 crore as against exports of only Tk 24 in 1990-91 financial year showing a staggering adverse trade balance for Bangladesh.

SKOP

From Page 1 Col. 8

the government in the minister's absence.

The major issues, on which the two sides have already reached agreement, include the formation of a wages commission within a week and submission of the final report by that commission in three months, continuation of dialogue on the issue of further disinvestment and on the controversial clauses of the labour laws.

Under the MOU, the government will inform the SKOP leaders about the national minimum wages for the workers and employees within the next two months.

The two sides will sit again on Tuesday, December 24 to discuss the issues.

The first round of talks started at 3 pm yesterday with Abdullah Sarker, Nurul Anwar, Nazrul Islam Khan, Pratap Uddin and Shirin Akhter, among others, representing the SKOP and Labour Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Labour Secretary Mashtur Rahman and BNP MP Ashraf Hossain the government side. The round ended at 8 pm.

Before the start of the second round at ten pm, the SKOP leaders had sat at the SKOP office to work out the next course of action in the changed situation arising out of the withdrawal of barricade programme by jute and textile workers.

Nazrul Islam Khan, the general secretary of the labour front of the ruling BNP, told The Daily Star that the SKOP would not hesitate to go for a strong movement against the government if it showed negligence in considering the demands.

Comilla Board

From Page 1 Col. 5

10,254 came out successful. The percentage of successful candidates in the science group is 61.16 per cent.

In the Humanities Group, 34,038 students appeared in the examinations and 18,149 came out successful. The percentage of success is 53.31 per cent.

In the Commerce Group, 12,974 students appeared out of whom 8,276 passed. The percentage of successful candidates in the group is 63.78 per cent.

In the Agriculture Group, 216 candidates appeared out of whom 74 passed. The percentage of success in the group is 34.25 per cent.

Dhaka HSC

From Page 1 Col. 3

the total number of examinees was 194 of whom 54 came out successful with a 27.84 per cent success.

A total of 317 candidates sat for the examinations in the Home Economics of whom 269 were successful with a 84.86 per cent success.

Thirty-three candidates appeared at the examinations in Music Group with 72.73 percentage of success.

In the Islamic Education Group, three candidates sat for the examination of whom two came out successful. Of the two successful candidates one was in the First Division and the other in the Third Division.

3,462 students who enrolled as examinees did not appear in the examinations. Most of the absentees were from the male students.

Editor: S. M. Ali